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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 4065th meeting of the Security Council, held on 12 November 1999 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Georgia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, of 22 October 1999 (S/1999/1087).

"The Security Council warmly welcomes the appointment of Mr. Boden as resident Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and hopes the parties would see this as an opportune moment to give renewed impetus to the search for a political settlement.

"The Security Council welcomes the acceleration of bilateral contacts at all levels between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides and calls upon them to continue to expand their contacts.

"The Security Council notes with grave concern that, notwithstanding positive developments on some issues, no progress has been made on the key issues of the settlement, particularly the core issue of the status of Abkhazia, Georgia. The Council therefore strongly supports the intention of the Special Representative to submit as soon as possible further proposals to both sides on the distribution of constitutional competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi, as part of a comprehensive settlement, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders, working in close cooperation with the Russian Federation, in its capacity as facilitator, the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

"The Security Council reiterates its demand that the parties to the conflict widen and deepen their commitment to the United Nations-led peace process, in particular by resuming regular meetings of the Coordinating Council and of its working groups, and agrees with the Secretary-General that they must continue to meet regularly regardless of the constraints of

domestic politics. The Council calls upon the parties to agree upon and to take, in the nearest future, the first concrete steps towards the full return to Abkhazia, Georgia, of refugees and internally displaced persons in safe, secure and dignified conditions. The Council reminds the parties that this would enable the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to provide substantial material assistance. The Council reiterates its view on the unacceptability of any action by the Abkhaz leadership in contravention of the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

"The Security Council notes with satisfaction that the security situation has slightly improved, in particular the reduction of tension along the line of separation of forces, while noting the persistent precariousness of the security of the United Nations personnel. The Council reiterates its condemnation of the hostage-taking of seven United Nations personnel on 13 October 1999, welcomes the release of the hostages, and stresses that the perpetrators of this unacceptable act should be brought to justice. The Council welcomes UNOMIG keeping its security arrangements under constant review in order to ensure the highest possible level of security for its staff.

"The Security Council pays tribute to Mr. Bota for his valuable work while serving as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Council welcomes the important contributions that the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS peacekeeping force) continue to make in stabilizing the situation in the zone of conflict, notes that the working relationship between UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force has been good at all levels, and stresses the importance of continuing and increasing close cooperation and coordination between them in the performance of their respective mandates."

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